

UNMASKED

BY DENNIS DETWILLER

IN THE CITY
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As we agree with the growing consensus that “they” can and should be used as a gender-neutral, singular English language pronoun when one is needed, we have adopted that as the style in our products. If you see this grammatical construction, it is intentional.



ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

OVERVIEW

In the City is an adventure for *Unmasked* that is suitable for beginning or experienced players. It will be useful to have a copy of both *Unmasked* and the *Cypher System Rulebook* handy when running this adventure.



SYNOPSIS

The adventure is set in November 1986 in the default setting of **Boundary Bay, Long Island**. This scenario can easily be transplanted to nearly anywhere in the United States that has a big city nearby.

In the adventure, the PCs must first deal with a friend running off to New York City, and then—when their friend's boyfriend becomes entangled with a criminal enterprise—they must face the **Westies gang** of Hell's Kitchen. To make matters worse, this boyfriend is a prodigy with access to incredible superpowers.

Will the PCs be able to find their friend and prevent her boyfriend (and his mask-form) from inadvertently exposing the prodigies to the world at large?

RULEBOOK AND SETTING CALLOUTS

Throughout this supplement, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by one of these two symbols.



Cypher System Rulebook



Unmasked

These are page references to the *Cypher System Rulebook* and *Unmasked*, where you can find more information about the item, place, creature, or concept. It's not necessary to look up the references, but doing so may provide additional details.

 *Part 4: Welcome to Boundary Bay, New York, page 99*

Westies gang, page 5

MEMENTOS IN THE CITY



Mementos, page 168

Just like at home, **mementos**—mundane items imbued with one-off, superpowered effects (cyphers) that prodigies can sense and activate—are all over New York City. PCs that take time to track some down might come across the following mementos.

TROLL DOLL

Level: 1d6

Effect: When this toy's hair is ripped out, the user feels the uncertainty of stepping through the front door of a new school and all damage inflicted to living things within 20 feet (6 m) is automatically negated for 3 rounds. This affects enemies as well as allies.

UGLY KID CARD

Level: 1d6

Effect: When this collectible card (depicting "Stinky Pinky") is torn in half, the user feels like they've just been kicked in the crotch and is instantaneously transported to the nearest raised, safe vantage point overlooking their former position.

FAKE \$50 BILL STRIP-CLUB AD

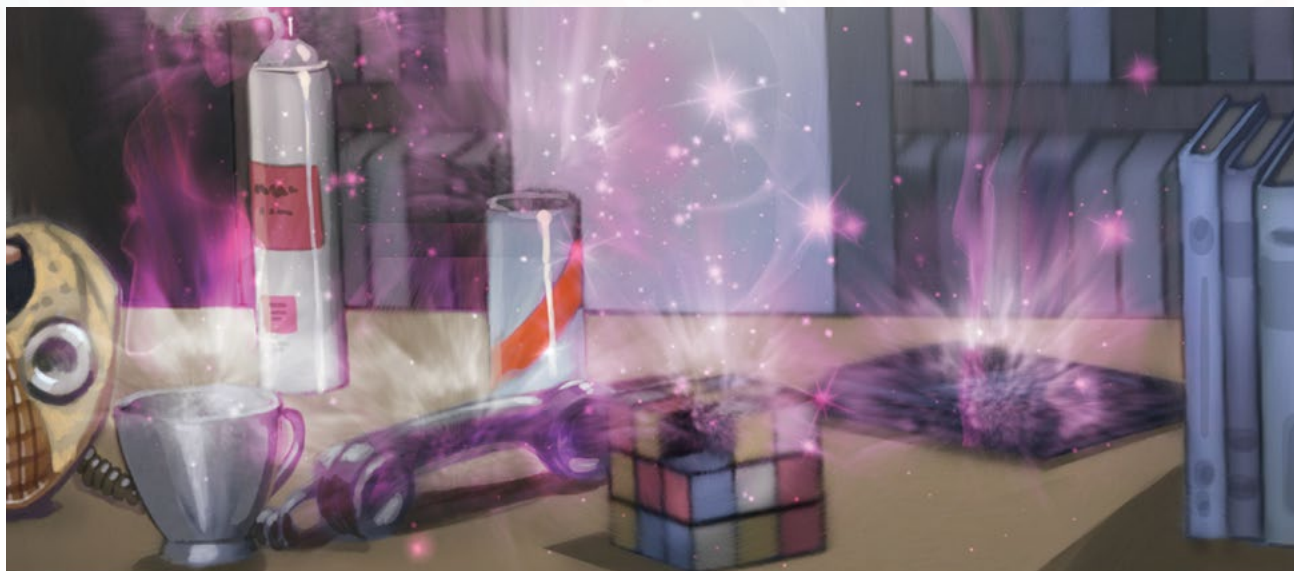
Level: 1d6

Effect: This is a cheap-looking photocopy of a \$50 bill that is actually an ad for a strip club when unfolded. When it is eaten, the user feels the exhaustion of a long run but can speak and understand any language for 24 hours.

SNAP ROCKS CANDY

Level: 1d6

Effect: This strawberry-flavored candy fizzes with carbonation when eaten. If eaten, the user feels a strong urge to urinate and can see the thoughts of any non-prodigy in sight as if those thoughts were floating up and out of their head, like a teletype of what they're thinking.



IN THE CITY



Robert McCannon, a teen from Boundary Bay, Long Island, who is also a **prodigy**, spends much of his time in New York City with his drunken, gambling-prone father. Robert's father has lately fallen afoul of the Westies, a prominent Irish gang affiliated with the Mafia. Hoping to save his father, Robert demonstrated a memento's amazing ability to his "Uncle Sean"—actually Sean Murphy, a lieutenant in the Westies gang who also happens to be Robert's godfather. Now Uncle Sean has ideas on how to apply Robert's "magic trick" to end a Westies' dispute in leadership which has gone on too long.

In exchange for forgiving his father's debts, Robert has agreed to use a memento to assist in a hit on Westies' boss Kevin Kelly so that Sean and his boss, Michael Dunphy, can "move up." What Robert doesn't know is that Dunphy plans on eliminating both Sean and Robert once the deed is done.



SCENE 1: THE PARTY— PATTY AND ROBERT

Patty Kirkoff is an outgoing, happy teenager who goes to high school with the PCs. (It might help to make Patty the sister of a PC so that they're more "on the hook.") She's in love with Robert McCannon, another teen at the high school. The two have been together since September and are a well-known item.

Patty is a top student at school and is heavily involved in social activities like world council, student government, and the debate club. She's also an avid "Trekkie," and it's a well-known fact her family collects Star Trek memorabilia. She's unembarrassed by this.

Robert is different. Though he was born in Boundary Bay, Robert began spending weekends and sometimes holidays at his father's apartment in New York City after his parents split in 1979. He stayed in school in Boundary Bay, but his attitude and even accent changed, and people noticed. He became gruffer, louder, and more brash.

And he got into trouble. Some of the kids have less-than-nice things to say about Robert, but it mostly amounts to him being rough-and-tumble, if not outright violent. Lately though, he's been hinting at bigger, scarier things. The PCs have noticed something else, too: Robert is a prodigy, though no one yet knows what his mask does.

Robert and Patty make an odd couple—and that's putting it mildly—but they seem somehow to complement one another.

The adventure begins on Saturday, November 29, Thanksgiving break. There's no school for the week. Thanksgiving has come and gone, and there's a party at

Prodigy, page 10

Patty: level 3, positive social interactions as level 4

Rosalind Grevelli's house on Fox Run Road. Rosalind's party has the usual teenage fare—chips, beer, pizza, and bad music (“You Give Love a Bad Name” by Bon Jovi) played over and over again.

It's just another Boundary Bay shindig until Patty and Robert begin fighting. They shout at each other from all over the packed house, following each other from room to room, for over an hour. PCs who pay attention (or get involved) learn the following.

- Robert received a phone call from “the city” sometime before the party.
- Patty doesn't want Robert to go somewhere with someone named Sean.
- Patty is pissed that Robert is suddenly leaving when they have tickets to *Star Trek IV*.
- Patty's threats escalate, but Robert seems sullen and withdrawn.
- Finally, Robert literally removes her hands from his shoulders and leaves.
- Outside, Robert gets into a 1983 Trans Am (black and gold) with New York plates. When he opens the door, a blond, balding, older man is visible in the driver's seat for a moment.
- Robert drives off into the night. Patty weeps, comforted by her girlfriends.

Those who dig deeper with Patty can find out many things.

- Robert has fallen in with some rough people in New York.
- One of the guys, whom he calls Uncle Sean, seems to be the main influence.
- Since early this week, Sean has been calling Robert, bugging him to come out to the city for something. Robert wouldn't tell her what.
- Robert has seemed strange and distant for a few weeks.
- She worries that maybe he's in big trouble.

SCENE 2: THE PHONE CALL—PATTY RINGS UP

Late that night, Patty calls up one of the PCs in tears. Honking and engines can be heard behind her voice. Patty says she's in New York City. She came in by train to Penn Station. She knows where Robert is going, and she's going to find him before he does something stupid. She intends to check Rob's dad's apartment on the West Side—close enough that she's going to walk there. She reassures the PCs, saying she'll be home tomorrow night at the latest with Robert in tow. Finally, she tells the PC that her mother will be calling and they need to cover for her.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Saturday, November 29th (8:30 p.m.):

Patty Kirkoff and Robert McCannon have a fight during a party at Rosalind Grevelli's house. Robert leaves in a black-and-gold Trans Am with someone named Sean.

Saturday, November 29th (11:45 p.m.):

Patty Kirkoff, worried for her boyfriend, takes a Long Island Railroad train into Penn Station, Manhattan, to look for him.

Sunday, November 30th (2:15 a.m.):

Patty calls up one of the PCs and informs them she's in New York City, looking for Robert.

Monday, December 1st (12:00 p.m.):

A group of the Westies, along with Robert McCannon and Sean Murphy, wait outside Kevin Kelly's apartment building, preparing to kill him when he exits.





SCENE 3: LOADING UP FOR THE BIG CITY—BY ROAD OR RAIL

Barring some prodigy ability, getting to New York City will involve a car or a train. Taking a car to the city requires two hours and thirty minutes. Parking in the city is *expensive*, and there's practically never any street parking available. Anyone putting their car in a garage must pay \$28 a day.

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) runs from Boundary Bay directly to Penn Station in the middle of Manhattan, the same station Patty mentioned. Tickets cost \$54 each, and the train ride takes about two hours. Penn Station is an enormous, multi-level, mostly underground train station where a ticket can be bought for almost anywhere in the continental United States. In addition to travelers, the station is filled with criminals, police, and the homeless.

Exiting Penn Station brings the PCs out onto 7th Avenue and the overwhelming reality of the city.

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL GEEKS

New York City in 1986 is dangerous, dirty, and violent. It's in the midst of the crack cocaine epidemic (in which the Westies centrally feature). Entire areas of the city clear out after dark, leaving only the homeless or criminal elements. Great swaths of Manhattan are no-go zones (including parts of the Upper West Side, the Bronx, and Alphabet City). The GM should strive to make the kids from Boundary Bay feel ill-at-ease in the city, especially at night when anything can happen.

SCENE 4: WHERE TO?

New York City is a very big place, and there are a ton of places for the PCs to start. It's best to remind them of several clues: *Patty called from near Penn Station; she mentioned Rob's dad lived on the West Side; she said, "I can just walk there,"; and she expected to be coming home "tomorrow night."*

THE PHONE NUMBER

PCs with access to prodigy abilities (or contacts at a police department) might be able to track down the telephone number Patty called them from. Some telephone services in 1986 might have a callback service, where the calling number is called back directly. The number is also on Patty's family's telephone bills; it's the number she used to talk to Robert (because his father's number was cut off due to non-payment). The number is easy to spot on the bills as it pops up over and over again every few weeks in batches where it was called a dozen times over the space of an hour or so.

The phone number is to a pay phone on the corner of 8th Avenue and West 40th Street, right near Times Square in front of a Roy Rogers fast food restaurant, six blocks north of Penn Station. A homeless man named **Mo** lives in a tiny alley next to the restaurant, squeezing in and out of a small area between the buildings like a human floppy disk. Mo is of indeterminate age, whip thin, and covered in filth. He lives on discarded hamburgers and fries and spends his days watching the pay phone, as it is his main mode of communication with his daughter in Florida.

If called on the pay phone, Mo will exchange pleasantries with anyone who is

Mo: level 2, streetwise as level 4, drug use and drug identification as level 4

respectful. If someone has harsh words for him, he'll hang up on them without giving the phone's location. If they ask for the location of the phone, Mo will begin negotiating. He'll put on a pretty good act—implying he knows Patty, where she's headed, and other things—in order to pry a reward out of the caller.

Mo has particular insight into Patty because he stole her backpack while she was on the pay phone. When she was speaking to the PCs, he slid it into his hideout in the tiny alley. Mo has read Patty's diary, eaten her Doritos, chewed her Hubba-Bubba gum, and ran her Walkman batteries down to nothing. He also has her checkbook, though he hasn't figured out how to use it yet. Mo can use this information to strike a deal with the PCs.



In truth, Mo half-expects them to never show. If they *do* show, Mo will be a constant annoyance until the debt is paid. He'll follow them and, if particularly irked, might alert the police.

If the PCs spy on Mo, they'll soon see him messing with stuff that looks familiar, and if they see the backpack (a purple Jansport backpack—any of the PCs will immediately recognize it), they'll *certainly* know that Mo ran into Patty.

If confronted about his theft, threatened with the police, or bribed in any way, Mo will be forthcoming. He'll hand over the backpack, beg off, and lay low from the alley for a few days. He feels bad for leaving a “little kid” high-and-dry in the city. He might even help the PCs try to track her down with some of his street contacts. If he's asked about the black-and-gold Trans Am, the Westies, or Sean, he says he knows where that guy hangs out and can take the PCs there.

LEADS FROM HERE:

- Mo knows Patty went northwest, into the Upper West Side.
- Mo has Patty's backpack (and in it, her diary and black book).

THE MOVIES

Patty knows that Sean plans to be at a diner called the Dinette (which she has previously been to) tomorrow afternoon, but she's lost her backpack and her checkbook with it. She has just enough money to see the brand new *Star Trek IV* five times, killing most of the time between now and then in relative comfort. The nearest theater showing *Star Trek IV* is the Comet on Broadway and West 39th Street (on the way from Penn Station, in fact). Patty has camped here, moving into the various arcades and restaurants in nearby Times Square when she's booted from the theater. Clever PCs who recall Patty's Star Trek obsession might think to look for her here.

LEADS FROM HERE:

- Patty knows where the Dinette is and that Robert is supposed to be there tomorrow afternoon.
- Patty knows where Arthur McCannon, Robert's dad, lives.

IN THE BACKPACK

Patty's backpack has been cleaned out of food and supplies (Mo will hide the Walkman). It is purple and covered in pins, gew-gaws (like plastic monster finger-puppets), and patches—all dominated by a large Star Trek pin that says, "Live long and prosper." All that's left inside the backpack is Patty's diary, a black book, a pen, a brand-new novelization of *Star Trek IV*, and some photos of her and Robert. Her name is written in marker on a patch sewn on the inside of the bag.

- **The Diary:** Though it's a bit disjointed and hard to follow, this diary mostly concerns her relationship with Robert. The last few entries are filled with concern over Robert's "Uncle Sean," Robert's dad's drinking, and some meeting that is supposed to take place in the future. It's clear that some combination of these things are weighing on Robert, and Patty desperately wants to help him, but he continuously keeps her out of it. One entry mentions Robert's "weird mask" and his reticence to talk about it. It also mentions his obsession with an old, clicker-style TV remote control, which he carries everywhere with him. She knows only that Robert is in the city with his dad, nothing more.
- **The Black Book:** The book has many phone numbers known to the PCs (including the PCs' own home numbers back in Boundary Bay). It also has several numbers listed for Robert under various listings including "Rob's dad" (this number is disconnected), "Rob's Uncle" (rings the Dinette, see page 8), "Rob in City" (rings the pay phone on 8th Avenue and West 40th Street), and "Rob Home" (rings Robert's mother Jaqueline in Boundary Bay).

ROBERT'S DAD'S APARTMENT

Robert's dad, **Arthur McCannon**, lives on the third story of a six-story building on East 47th Street and 5th Avenue. There is no elevator. Arthur is a drunken gambler who has fallen behind on his payments—tens of thousands of dollars—to Sean Walsh, his best friend but also a lieutenant in the Westies gang (known as Uncle Sean to Robert).

Arthur can be found at his apartment, shut in at the order of his son. If confronted by "a bunch of kids," he'll get belligerent and even violent, if pushed. If confronted by mask-forms or the inexplicable powers of mementos, he'll be more . . . forthcoming. If sufficiently cowed, he will cover the basics of the entire story, though he doesn't really know what Robert has agreed to do for Sean (and he has no idea his son is a prodigy or even what that is).

LEADS FROM HERE:

- Arthur knows that Sean Murphy is at the Dinette daily.
- Arthur knows his son has fallen in with the Westies gang to cover Arthur's debt.
- Arthur knows Sean works for Michael Dunphy, the owner of the Dinette.
- Arthur knows Michael drives a black-and-gold Trans Am.

THE TRANS AM REGISTRATION

The Trans Am is registered to **Michael Dunphy**, who lives at a building on 12th Avenue and West 44th Street. Sean Murphy borrowed the car to go pick up the "muscle" for the hit that they have planned. Dunphy—a fat, older, bald man—can be easily picked out walking to his very distinct car, which is parked in a lot for the building across the highway. Every day he goes to the Dinette on 9th Avenue and sits about, reading the newspaper, taking bets, and issuing orders to his crew of Westies gang members.

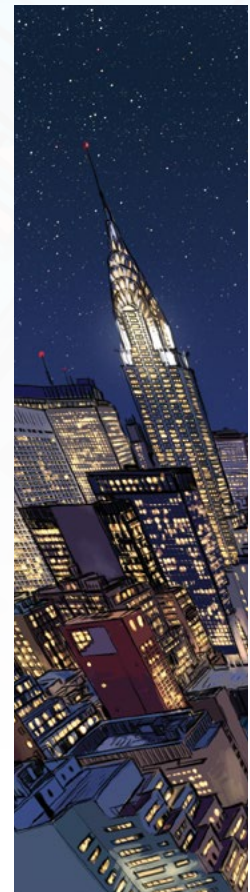
If the PCs search his apartment, they will find many things, including an address in Hell's Kitchen marked "KK" (for Kevin Kelly) with the following notes on a map next to the initials (these are the times that Kelly usually leaves or enters the tenement in Hell's Kitchen): "8AM, 1230P, 3P, 740P." There's also a safe containing \$3,000, a gram of cocaine, and a loaded Browning .45 pistol.

LEADS FROM HERE:

- Michael knows the whole plan: have Robert and Sean kill Kevin Kelly and then kill both Robert and Sean to cover his tracks. He has no knowledge of Robert's abilities.
- Michael knows where Kevin Kelly is hiding out from the police, as well as when he comes and goes from the tenement in Hell's Kitchen.

Arthur McCannon:
level 1, drinking as level 4

Michael Dunphy: *level 3, violence, guns, and drugs as level 5*





SCENE 5: IN THE CITY—THE DINETTE AND THE WESTIES

On the corner of 10th Avenue and West 49th Street, the Dinette is a small establishment designed to look like a railroad car. It has prominent signage out front and seems well maintained despite the run-down neighborhood. At all times, the pavement out front is occupied by various heavy-set guys, most wearing some combination of pilot's jackets, newsboy caps, and well-shined shoes. These are **Westies gang members**. All of them are career criminals who have performed violent acts, up to and often including kidnapping and murder. They are not kids playing games.

If anyone unfamiliar attempts to gain access to the Dinette, unless that person looks like they could be a cop or law enforcement, the bigger, scarier **Westies enforcers** tell them in no uncertain terms to "fuck off." Persistent types are smacked around. If the situation escalates from there then the guns come out, and the police show up after that.

During the day, the black-and-gold Trans Am can be seen out front, moved back and forth between two parking spaces (that always seem miraculously empty) so it doesn't get a ticket. This movement is done by one of the gang members.

Michael Dunphy can be seen sitting in the front window of the Dinette most of the day reading the newspaper. Inside, the Dinette does serve food but only variations on diner fare and only for gang members—no money ever changes hands. The Dinette is a classic front, but the Westies aren't stupid enough to keep anything here that might incriminate them. Pistols are kept in brown paper bags in the alley or on top of the fire hydrant out front to be grabbed and used at a moment's notice. None of the gang members (including Michael) carry a pistol on their person.

Patty believes Robert will be here in the afternoon, but Robert lied to protect her. He won't be here. Instead, at a little past 12 p.m., a group of Westies will drive a stolen van (parked on the corner) to the Tenement to carry out the hit on Kevin Kelly.

LEADS FROM HERE:

- Prodigies with abilities to probe minds or trick people might learn a lot about Kevin Kelly, his location, and the planned hit.
- Using mask-forms to terrorize Michael Dunphy will reveal a lot of the above information.
- The van is filled with enough weaponry to put anyone behind bars for twenty-five years.

Westies Gang Member:
level 4; Armor 1

Westies Enforcer:
level 5, hand-to-hand as
level 6; Armor 1

SCENE 6: HELL'S KITCHEN— THE TENEMENT, SEAN, ROBERT, AND KID VICIOUS

Kevin Kelly is a wanted criminal and a known leader of the Westies gang. His high-profile hits and seizing of power has raised the ire of other criminal enterprises, the cops, and many members of his own gang. Michael Dunphy—a lieutenant to Kelly—believes things would be better if Kelly was gone. For one, the police might think the Westies were falling apart, and two, Kelly's death would silence him permanently, preventing Kelly from implicating Dunphy in dozens of crimes.

Dunphy has ordered Sean Murphy to oversee the hit. It will be carried out by a group of shooters as well as a new kid Dunphy doesn't really know, **Robert McCannon**. Dunphy doesn't really care who the new kid is because the moment Kelly is dead the shooters are supposed to kill the kid and Murphy both. Those two will take the fall for the hit, leaving Dunphy squeaky clean.

The Tenement on West 57th Street and Eleventh Avenue is a six-story, run-down building owned by Kelly though various shell companies. The building is occupied by a mix of middle-class families as well as a select few individuals favored by the Westies. Kelly and four men occupy the entire top

floor. Kelly's only real love in the world are his two King Charles Spaniels, Lola and Dolly. These are also his primary reason to ever go outside. He walks the dogs at 8 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 7:40 p.m. every day, sometimes stopping at a nearby noodle house or pizza place for a bite to eat. He always has his four **bodyguards** with him.

At noon, Robert and Sean are waiting in an alley across the street. Moments later, the van pulls up with the heavily armed Westies gang members in it. Minutes after that, Kelly, his dogs, and his four bodyguards exit the Tenement across the street for their second walk of the day.

At this point, Robert looks terrified and seeks assurance from his Uncle Sean that if he does this his dad's debt will be paid. Sean confirms. Robert removes an old, single-button clicker remote control from his pocket. Any prodigy present can see that it is a powerful memento. Robert points the remote at the men across the street and presses the button.

Kelly and his men instantly freeze in place—all of them, even the dogs. Some are even frozen between steps in mid-air. Few on the street even notice, but the Westies and Sean are dumbstruck.

Then all hell breaks loose.

Kevin Kelly: level 5, criminal racketeering as level 7

Bodyguard: level 3, brawling as level 4

Robert McCannon: level 3, brawling as level 4



Westies Hitman: level 4; Armor 1; submachinegun or shotgun inflicts 5 points of damage

The seven **Westies hitmen** pour out of the van. They, along with Sean Murphy, open up on Kelly and his bodyguards with shotguns and submachine guns at close range. Only at this point does Robert have second thoughts. Luckily for him, the bullets that enter the area near Kelly slow and then stop in space, suspended in time just like the men and dogs. Even the criminals carrying out this crime will be awestruck by the effect, so much so that they'll fail to realize they're not actually killing Kelly. Finally, the shooting dies down. The Westies stand around the frozen men, mouths agape.

Then, just as suddenly as the effect began, Kelly, his dogs, his men, and all the bullets in the area of effect drop out of the air. The bullets clatter to the ground. The bodyguards are momentarily stunned but quickly recover, and the street becomes a shooting gallery.

After a few minutes, the police will arrive, but not before Robert becomes **Kid Vicious**—his mask-form—to try and set this straight. Immediately, all Westies present will turn on Kid Vicious and try to kill him while Kelly tries to escape.

Kid Vicious: level 6; health 40; quantum kung-fu inflicts 6 points of damage (power shifted); regenerates 1 health per turn; power shifts: +3 to resilience, +2 to speed

Kid Vicious: McCannon's mask-form is a thin loudmouth with a Boston accent who "freakin' HATES New YAWK." His purple hair is swept up in an improbable coif which wiggles and bounces as he talks. He can move, jump, and attack by "surfing waveforms" and "collapsing the sonofabitch like a pup tent." Those watching him move and strike see ghostly reflections of his body that sputter and skip through the air at impossible speeds. Kid Vicious thinks Robert is "a class-A loser," but then again Robert is his only conduit to the world. Vicious is not down with crime. He hates thieves, crooks, and criminals of all types, and he will do his best to cajole, beat, and psychologically torture them—though he will stop short of killing them.

SCENE 7: CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure might open a can of worms for player characters hoping to keep their superpowers a secret. If a running gun battle with costumed vigilantes doesn't make the six o'clock news, there are always eye witnesses, police, and emergency crews drawn to the scene. Did anyone see the PCs change or change back? This incident in New York—especially if the PCs were sloppy and people caught them on camera—may be the opening salvo in exposing the prodigy phenomenon to the whole world.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 2 XP for keeping Robert from being killed and 1 XP if no one else is killed. They earn an additional 1 XP if they don't allow any normal people to see their mask-forms (or can create a plausible explanation for their mask-forms, such as saying they're going to a costume party).

